

Race bias in Britain's workplaces

Level 1 • Elementary

1 Warmer

Where do you think these women come from?

Nazia Mahmood _____

Mariam Namagembe _____

Alison Taylor _____

2 Key words

Write the key words from the article into the sentences below. The paragraph number is given to help you.

jobseeker

discrimination

false identities

applicant

ethnic minority

race bias

- _____ is when you treat someone in a way that is unfair or different from the way you treat other people because of their origins, skin colour, language, etc. (title)
- _____ is unfair treatment of someone because of their religion, race or other personal features. (para 1)
- When you take on _____, you pretend to be someone else. (para 2)
- A _____ is someone who is looking for a job. (para 2)
- An _____ is someone who writes letters and emails to try to get a job. (para 3)
- An _____ is a group of people with the same culture and traditions who live in a place where most people have a different culture and different traditions. (para 3)

guilty

explanation

graduate

contract

echo

evidence

- A _____ is an agreement between two businesses that says what each must do for the other or give to the other. (para 4)
- An _____ is a reason you give for something that has happened. (para 6)
- A _____ person or company is one that has done something wrong. (para 7)
- _____ is facts or information that help to prove something. (para 8)
- _____ is a verb that means *to express or show the ideas or feelings that someone else has*. (para 9)
- A _____ is someone who has a degree from a university. (para 9)

Race bias in Britain's workplaces

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Undercover job hunters reveal huge race bias in Britain's workplaces

Rajeev Syal, investigations editor
18 October, 2009

- 1 A government operation has found widespread racial discrimination in Britain against workers with African and Asian names.
- 2 Government employees sent nearly 3,000 job applications using false identities. They wanted to find out if employers were discriminating against jobseekers with foreign names. False identities were created with names that sounded like they come from three different communities – Nazia Mahmood, Mariam Namagembe and Alison Taylor. Every false job applicant had a British education, qualifications and work experience.
- 3 The government found that an applicant who people thought was white got either an invitation to an interview or a positive telephone call after they had sent out nine applications. People from ethnic minorities with the same qualifications and experience had to send 16 job applications before they received a phone call or interview.
- 4 Jim Knight, the British government's employment minister, is now thinking about stopping some companies from applying for government contracts. "We thought there might be a problem. Now we know how big it is," he said. "Jobseekers with an Asian or African name face real racial discrimination."
- 5 Between November 2008 and May 2009, researchers sent three different applications for 987 jobs – such as accountants and IT technicians, and less well-paid positions such as care workers and sales assistants.
- 6 All the jobs were in Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Glasgow, Leeds, London and Manchester. The report says that racial discrimination was the only explanation for the difference in treatment between white British and ethnic minority jobseekers.
- 7 It found that government employers such as hospitals and schools were less likely to

discriminate on the grounds of race than those in private companies. The research also found that larger employers were less likely to discriminate than small employers. Researchers will not give the names of the guilty employers, but they will contact the companies.

- 8 The report has been welcomed as evidence of discrimination in the job market. Iqbal Wahhab, chair of the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group, said: "The results of the report are unquestionable – we live in a country where racial discrimination goes unchallenged." Wahhab said that the employers should not be named, but that they should be made to change the way they choose new employees.
- 9 The findings echo the experience of black and Asian jobseekers. James Nkwacha, 28, a physics graduate whose family are from Nigeria, said he has applied for 60 jobs this year but had only two replies. "I am qualified for the jobs. But for some reason I am not invited for interviews," he said.
- 10 Navdeep Sethia, 24, an unemployed architecture graduate from London, has sent more than 400 job applications, but has only heard back from 40 employers and has had fewer than 20 interviews. "I feel that my foreign-sounding name makes a lot of difference. Employers see my name and that is enough for them," he said.

Additional reporting by Sakshi Ojha

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First published in *The Guardian*, 18/10/09

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3 Comprehension check

Match the sentence halves to summarize the article.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. British government employees sent out ... | ... from Britain's Asian and African communities |
| 2. Two of the names represent women ... | ... he cannot get a job because of his name. |
| 3. All three 'applicants' had ... | ... James Nkwacha does not have a job. |
| 4. The 'white British' applicant got ... | ... stop some companies from getting government contracts. |
| 5. The British Employment Minister might ... | ... job applications using false names. |
| 6. Smaller companies were more racially ... | ... similar work experience and qualifications. |
| 7. Even though he is highly qualified, ... | ... discriminating than larger ones. |
| 8. Navdeep Sethia believes that ... | ... more interviews and phone calls. |

4 Vocabulary: Work

Complete the word wheel with work-related words from the article.



Now write your own example sentences for five of the words.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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5 Discussion

Have you, or anyone you know, experienced racial discrimination? What happened?

In which of these other situations do you think there is racial discrimination?

- sports
- politics
- fashion
- school / university
- other ...

6 Webquest

Look up the poem '*And you calling me coloured?*' on the internet and answer the questions below.

What is it about?

What do the colours signify?

Who wrote it and why?

Compare your answers in class. Does everyone have the same answers?

Race bias in Britain's workplaces

Level 2 • Intermediate

1 Warmer

Where do you think these women come from?

Nazia Mahmood _____

Mariam Namagembe _____

Alison Taylor _____

2 Key words

Write the key words from the article into the sentences below. The paragraph number is given to help you.

ethnic minority	flawed	candidates	race bias
public sector	indicate	applicant	recession
Chambers of Commerce	false identities	systematically	discrimination

- _____ is an attitude that you have that makes you treat someone in a way that is unfair or different from the way you treat other people because of their origins, skin colour, language, etc. (title)
- _____ is unfair treatment of someone because of their religion, race or other personal features. (para 1)
- When you take on _____, you pretend to be someone else. (para 2)
- An _____ is someone who writes emails and letters to apply for a job. (para 2)
- _____ are people competing for a job. (para 3)
- The _____ refers to the industries and services, for example schools and hospitals, that are supported by tax money and controlled by the government of a country. (para 7)
- An _____ is a group of people with the same culture and traditions who live in a place where most people have a different culture and different traditions. (para 8)
- Something that is done according to a careful plan and in a thorough way is done _____. (para 8)
- A verb meaning *to show that something will happen, is true, or exists*. _____ (para 11)
- An organization that looks after the interests of small businesses and shops. _____ (para 12)
- Something that is _____ lacks information or contains faults. (para 12)
- A _____ is a period when trade and industry are not successful and there is a lot of unemployment. (para 13)

Race bias in Britain's workplaces

Level 2 • Intermediate

Undercover job hunters reveal huge race bias in Britain's workplaces

Rajeev Syal, investigations editor
18 October, 2009

- 1 A government operation which targeted hundreds of employers across Britain has uncovered widespread racial discrimination against workers with African and Asian names.
- 2 Researchers sent nearly 3,000 job applications using false identities in an attempt to find out if employers were discriminating against jobseekers with foreign names. Using names that are recognizably from three different communities – Nazia Mahmood, Mariam Namagembe and Alison Taylor – false identities were created. Every false applicant had a British education, qualifications and work experience.
- 3 They found that an applicant who people thought was white only needed to send nine applications before receiving a positive response – either an invitation to an interview or an encouraging telephone call. Minority candidates with the same qualifications and experience had to send 16 applications before receiving a similar response.
- 4 After hearing the results, Jim Knight, the employment minister, is considering banning certain companies from applying for government contracts. "We suspected there was a problem. This uncovers the shocking size of it," he said. "Candidates with an Asian or African name face real discrimination."
- 5 Researchers sent three different applications for 987 job vacancies between November 2008 and May 2009. Nine occupations were chosen, ranging from highly qualified positions such as accountants and IT technicians to less well-paid positions such as care workers and sales assistants.
- 6 All the job vacancies were based in Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Glasgow, Leeds, London and Manchester. The report concludes that there was no explanation for the difference in treatment found between white British and ethnic minority applicants other than racial discrimination.
- 7 It found that public sector employers were less likely to discriminate on the grounds of race than those in the private sector. The research also found that larger employers were less likely to discriminate than small employers. Researchers have refused to release the names of the guilty employers, but they will be contacted to let them know they had been targeted.
- 8 The report has been welcomed by senior race advisers as evidence of discrimination in the job market. Iqbal Wahhab, chair of the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group, said: "The results of the report are unquestionable – we live in a society where racial discrimination systematically occurs and mostly goes unchallenged." Wahhab said that the employers should not be named, but instead persuaded to change.
- 9 The findings echo the experience of black and Asian jobseekers contacted this weekend. James Nkwacha, 28, a physics graduate whose family are from Nigeria, said he has applied for 60 jobs this year but had only two replies. "I am qualified for the jobs. But for some reason I am not invited for interviews," he said.
- 10 Navdeep Sethia, 24, an unemployed architecture graduate from Chalk Farm, central London, has submitted more than 400 job applications, but has only heard back from 40 employers and has had fewer than 20 interviews. "I personally feel that my foreign-sounding name makes a lot of difference. Employers see my name and that is enough for them," he said.
- 11 Peter Luff, a Conservative politician said the survey was a worthwhile exercise. "The conclusions are extremely worrying and indicate discrimination which will have to be looked at closely once the full report is released this week," he said. "I think this was a good exercise by the government, and was worth the money."
- 12 Abigail Morris, from the British Chambers of Commerce, said the research was flawed. "There are limitations to the results. The researchers only used nine occupations. We are concerned that the results will allow people to say that most employers are racist, whereas

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they do not prove that.”

- 13 Morris also questioned whether the government should be involved in using an operation to uncover racism in the middle of a recession and whether it was worth the money. “Business is struggling with the worst recession for a

generation. Is this really the time to be wasting government and company time and money with fake CVs?” she asked.

Additional reporting by Sakshi Ojha

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First published in *The Guardian*, 18/10/09

3 Comprehension check

Look back over the article and decide whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F). Correct any false sentences.

- Three British government employees sent out false job applications using their own names.
- Two of the names represent women from Britain's Asian and African communities.
- All three women had similar work experience and qualifications.
- All three received a similar amount of responses.
- The British Employment Minister is considering stopping some companies (who practice racial discrimination) from getting government contracts.
- Larger companies were more racially discriminating than smaller ones.
- Navdeep Sethia believes that he cannot get a job because of his name.
- The British Chambers of Commerce say the operation was necessary and financially worthwhile.

4 Language

Complete the table with words from the article.

verb	noun
apply	
qualify	
respond	
invite	
limit	
	submission
	graduate
	occupation
	creation
discriminate	

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Level 2 • Intermediate

5 Discussion

- Do you know anyone who has experienced racial discrimination?
- What other kinds of discrimination can you think of?
- Apart from when applying for a job, in what other situations are people likely to encounter discrimination (in your country or in other countries you have visited)?

6 Webquest

Look up the poem '*And you calling me coloured?*' on the internet and answer the questions below.

What is it about?

What do the colours signify?

Who wrote it and why?

Compare your answers in class. Does everyone have the same answers?

Race bias in Britain's workplaces

Level 3 • Advanced

1 Warmer

Where do you think these women come from?

Nazia Mahmood _____

Mariam Namagembe _____

Alison Taylor _____

2 Key words

Find the key words in the article and write them into the sentences below. The paragraph number is given to help you.

- _____ is an attitude that you have that makes you treat someone in a way that is unfair or different from the way you treat other people because of their origins, skin colour, language, etc. (2 words, title)
- When you take on _____, you pretend to be someone else. (2 words, subtitle)
- _____ is unfair treatment of someone because of their religion, race, or other personal features. (para 1)
- _____ are people competing for a job. (para 3)
- Another word for *honest and sincere*. _____ (para 6)
- The _____ refers to the industries and services, for example schools and hospitals, that are supported by tax money and controlled by the government of a country. (2 words, para 7)
- An _____ is a group of people with the same culture and traditions who live in a place where most people have a different culture and different traditions. (2 words, para 9)
- Something that is done according to a careful plan and in a thorough way is done _____. (para 9)
- Remarks or behaviour intended to make someone or something seem silly by making fun of them in an unkind way. _____ (para 12)
- Another way of saying *extremely worrying*. _____ (2 words, para 12)
- An organization that looks after the interests of small businesses and shops. _____ (3 words, para 13)
- Something that is _____ lacks information or contains faults. (para 13)

Race bias in Britain's workplaces

Level 3 • Advanced

Undercover job hunters reveal huge race bias in Britain's workplaces

Government employees create false identities to send CVs to hundreds of employers in operation to uncover discrimination

Rajeev Syal, investigations editor
18 October, 2009

- 1 A government operation targeting hundreds of employers across Britain has uncovered widespread racial discrimination against workers with African and Asian names.
- 2 Researchers sent nearly 3,000 job applications under false identities in an attempt to discover if employers were discriminating against jobseekers with foreign names. Using names recognizably from three different communities – Nazia Mahmood, Mariam Namagembe and Alison Taylor – false identities were created with similar experience and qualifications. Every false applicant had British education and work histories.
- 3 They found that an applicant who appeared to be white would send nine applications before receiving a positive response of either an invitation to an interview or an encouraging telephone call. Minority candidates with the same qualifications and experience had to send 16 applications before receiving a similar response.
- 4 The alarming results have prompted Jim Knight, the employment minister, to consider barring certain companies from applying for government contracts. "We suspected there was a problem. This uncovers the shocking scale of it," he said. "Candidates with an Asian or African name face real discrimination and this has exposed the fact that companies are missing out on real talent."
- 5 Researchers sent three different applications for 987 vacancies between November 2008 and May 2009. Nine occupations were chosen, ranging from highly qualified positions such as accountants and IT technicians to less well-paid positions such as care workers and sales assistants.
- 6 All the job vacancies were in the private, public and voluntary sectors and were based in Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Glasgow, Leeds, London and Manchester. The report concludes that there was no plausible explanation for the difference in treatment found between white British and ethnic minority applicants other than racial discrimination.
- 7 It found that public sector employers were less likely to have discriminated on the grounds of race than those in the private sector. The research is also understood to have found that larger employers were less likely to discriminate than small employers.
- 8 Researchers have refused to release the names of the guilty employers, but it is expected that they will be contacted to let them know they had been targeted.
- 9 The report has been welcomed by senior race advisers as evidence of discrimination in the job market. Iqbal Wahhab, chair of the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group, said: "The evidence of the report is unquestionable – we live in a society where racial discrimination systematically occurs and mostly goes unchallenged." Wahhab said that the employers should not be named, but instead persuaded to change.
- 10 The findings echo the experience of black and Asian jobseekers contacted this weekend. James Nkwacha, 28, a physics graduate whose family are from Nigeria, said he has applied for 60 jobs this year but had only two replies. "The jobs are within my range. I am qualified for them. But for some reason I have been overlooked," he said.
- 11 Navdeep Sethia, 24, an unemployed architecture graduate from Chalk Farm, central London, has submitted more than 400 job applications, but has only heard back from 40 employers and has had fewer than 20 interviews. "I personally feel that my foreign-sounding name makes a lot of difference. Employers see my name and that is enough for them to put my application aside," he said.
- 12 Peter Luff, a Conservative politician praised the

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Level 3 • Advanced

survey as a worthwhile exercise – as long as the companies that have been targeted were not exposed to public ridicule. “The conclusions are deeply disturbing and indicate the probability of significant discrimination which will have to be analyzed closely once the full report is released this week,” he said. “I think this was a good exercise by the government, and was worth the money.”

- 13 Abigail Morris, from the British Chambers of Commerce, said the research was flawed. “There are limitations to the results. The researchers only used nine occupations, and I am not sure that the number of replies they received is a representative sample. We are concerned that the results will allow people to

say that most employers are racist, whereas they prove no such thing.”

- 14 Morris also questioned whether the government should be involved in using an operation to uncover racism in the middle of a recession and whether it was worth the money. “Business is struggling with the worst recession for a generation. Is this really the time to be wasting government resources and the time of hard-pressed companies with fake CVs?” she asked.

Additional reporting by Sakshi Ojha

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First published in *The Guardian*, 18/10/09

3 Comprehension check

Look back over the article to find the answers to these questions. Make notes and then compare your answers in class.

1. How many false identities did the British government employees create for the operation?

2. In which ways were the identities similar; in which ways were they different?

3. How did the responses the false applicants receive differ?

4. What is the British Employment Minister considering doing as a result of the operation?

5. In the article find examples of public sector jobs and private sector jobs.

6. What do Iqbal Wahhab, Peter Luff, and Abigail Morris say about the operation?

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Level 3 • Advanced

4 Language

Complete the table with words from the article.

verb	noun
apply	
qualify	
respond	
invite	
limit	
	submission
	graduate
	occupation
	creation
discriminate	

5 Discussion

- Do you know anyone who has experienced racial discrimination?
- What other kinds of discrimination can you think of?
- Apart from when applying for a job, in what other situations are people likely to encounter discrimination (in your country or in other countries you have visited)?

6 Webquest

Look up the poem '*And you calling me coloured?*' on the internet and answer the questions below.

What is it about?

What do the colours signify?

Who wrote it and why?

Compare your answers in class. Does everyone have the same answers?

Race bias in Britain's workplaces

Level 1 • Elementary

KEY

2 Key words

1. race bias
2. discrimination
3. false identities
4. jobseeker
5. applicant
6. ethnic minority
7. contract
8. explanation
9. guilty
10. evidence
11. echo
12. graduate

4 Vocabulary: Work

Possible answers:

jobseeker, employer, employee, workers, applications, interviews, applicant, contract, job, accountants, IT technicians, positions, care workers, sales assistants, architect, companies ...

3 Comprehension check

1. British government employees sent out job applications using false names.
2. Two of the names represent women from Britain's Asian and African communities.
3. All three 'applicants' had similar work experience and qualifications.
4. The 'white British' applicant got more interviews and phone calls.
5. The British Employment Minister might stop some companies from getting government contracts.
6. Smaller companies were more racially discriminating than larger ones.
7. Even though he is highly qualified, James Nkwacha does not have a job.
8. Navdeep Sethia believes that he cannot get a job because of his name.

Race bias in Britain's workplaces

Level 2 • Intermediate

KEY

2 Key words

1. race bias
2. discrimination
3. false identities
4. applicant
5. candidates
6. public sector
7. ethnic minority
8. systematically
9. indicate
10. Chambers of Commerce
11. flawed
12. recession

4 Language

verb	noun
apply	application
qualify	qualification
respond	response
invite	invitation
limit	limitations
submit	submission
graduate	graduate
occupy	occupation
create	creation
discriminate	discrimination

3 Comprehension check

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. F
5. T
6. F
7. T
8. F

Race bias in Britain's workplaces

Level 3 • Advanced

KEY

2 Key words

1. race bias
2. false identities
3. discrimination
4. candidates
5. plausible
6. public sector
7. ethnic minority
8. systematically
9. ridicule
10. deeply disturbing
11. Chambers of Commerce
12. flawed

4 Language

verb	noun
apply	application
qualify	qualification
respond	response
invite	invitation
limit	limitations
submit	submission
graduate	graduate
occupy	occupation
create	creation
discriminate	discrimination

3 Comprehension check

Some possible answers and notes:

1. Nazia Mahmood, Mariam Namagembe and Alison Taylor.
2. They had similar experience and qualifications work histories and a British education; their names and perceived race were different.
3. An applicant who appeared to be white would send nine applications before receiving a positive response of either an invitation to an interview or an encouraging telephone call. Minority candidates with the same qualifications and experience had to send 16 applications before receiving a similar response.
4. Barring certain companies from obtaining (profitable) government contracts.
5. Public sector jobs: care worker; private sector jobs: IT technician, accountant.
6. Iqbal Wahhab: the employers should not be named, but instead persuaded to change.
Peter Luff: the conclusions are deeply disturbing and indicate the probability of significant discrimination.
Abigail Morris: the operation was a waste of public money – especially during a recession.